

## Liquidation

*Silent, like in a graveyard,  
Stand the little houses, sunken in sorrow.  
No trace of that life has here remained,  
Every wall is now black and grey.*

*As I walk down streets empty and bleak,  
The echo of my own footsteps [is all that] I hear.  
I gaze about: I [can] still perceive the traces  
Of the spilt innocent blood.*

*I open the door of a tiny little house,  
The sign of poverty is in every corner.  
An old cupboard stands open wide;  
On a bookshelf, I see a torn prayer-shawl.*

*A Chymesz, a Machzor, a Sidder, a Tchine.<sup>1</sup>  
Who has need of these sacred books now?  
All those who once lived here,  
To dark graves were driven away.*

*The Study-hall, bare and deserted,  
With smashed windows stands.  
Silenced forever is the song of the Talmud,  
Which faraway could already be heard.*

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<sup>1</sup> [TN: Sacred Jewish books; one of the five books of the Pentateuch, a prayer-book for the High Holidays, an everyday prayer-book, and a prayer printed on a page, respectively. We have retained the original Hebrew words as they were pronounced in Poland in our rendition of the poem for the sake of conciseness.]

*Also the Great Synagogue, the beautiful,  
Has like a ruin been left standing.  
Its congregants, large and small,  
Have all together been driven away.*

*Shrouded in the darkness of night,  
The shtetl lies in deep sorrow.  
In the morning another day comes,  
A day without sun, a grey [kind of] day.*

*Only yesterday were [they] deported from here,  
Under a hail of bullets and fire.  
Ash and smoke has remained of them –  
Of the human life which is sacred and dear.*

*Driven away like dogs by the Nazi murderers,  
On their last road of suffering and pain.  
The road became wet from the tears,  
The air echoed with weeping.*

*May that day be turned into  
An everlasting night.  
May the sun never shine there again,  
For the black power of Satan!*

**Jakow Fiszer**